

South Tahoe woman dies in car crash

A South Lake Tahoe woman died in single-vehicle accident on the West Slope on Saturday.

Celina Alexandre, 26, was headed east on Highway 50 near Paul Bunyon Road in Camino when her vehicle drifted off the roadway and struck a tree, according to the California Highway Patrol.

This occurred about 9:35pm April 30. She was pronounced dead at the scene. She was wearing her seatbelt.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Woman gets stuck on cliffs at Emerald Bay



El Dorado County SAR brings a woman to safety May 5 at Emerald Bay. Photo/EDSO

An Incline Village woman had to be rescued from the cliffs at Emerald Bay on Thursday afternoon.

Jane Rylander had been climbing in the steep cliff bands from Vikingsholm parking lot down toward the castle. She became stuck on the cliff band after slipping and sliding down the embankment. She was not hurt, but she couldn't climb up or down.

The El Dorado County search and rescue team used ropes to reach Rylander, and then lowered her to safety May 5.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

DRI seeds clouds using

unmanned aircraft



Drone America's Todd Richman and Kyle Pruett prepare to test fly the Savant sUAS with cloud seeding flares at the Hawthorne Industrial Airport on April 29. Photo/Kevin Clifford, Drone America

By Sean Whaley, Las Vegas Review-Journal

For the first time in aviation history, a fixed-wing unmanned aircraft has successfully tested a cloud-seeding payload during an experimental flight in Nevada.

Flown at Hawthorne Industrial Airport under the state's Federal Aviation Administration Unmanned Aircraft Systems Test Site designation, the Drone America Savant aircraft reached an altitude of 400 feet and flew for about 18 minutes Friday.

The drone – named the “Sandoval Silver State Seeder” in honor of Gov. Brian Sandoval's support for the state's drone industry – deployed two silver-iodide flares, successfully

testing and demonstrating its ability to perform unmanned aerial cloud seeding operations.

Read the whole story

Mixed earnings report for Caesars

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Caesars Entertainment, the casino giant behind many resorts on the Las Vegas Strip and two at Lake Tahoe, reported its first quarter earnings Thursday.

Revenue of \$1.2 billion is an increase of 6.7 percent from the first quarter of 2015. However, that doesn't include results from Caesars Entertainment Operating Co., or CEOC, the company division that filed for bankruptcy in January 2015. Including that division, Caesars had net revenue of \$2.3 billion, up 4 percent.

The company reported a net loss of \$308 million, compared to reported earnings of \$6.8 billion in the first quarter of 2015.

Caesars CEO Mark Frissora said on a conference call with analysts that growth in his company's interactive business was a highlight of the quarter, as was a "strong increase in lodging revenues," specifically at the Linq hotel.

Read the whole story

Racial slurs by cops becoming more unacceptable

By Cindy Chang and Alene Tchekmedyian, Los Angeles Times

In Santa Clara County, jail guards sent text messages using racial slurs to describe African Americans, Jews and Vietnamese Americans.

In San Francisco, as many as 19 police officers have been implicated in a texting scandal involving racial and homophobic insults.

Recent controversies over emails and texts show how the intense scrutiny currently faced by police officers has extended beyond their actions on patrol and into communications that some thought were private.

The shift has come as police departments nationwide are trying to address the attitudes of officers before problems on the streets arise. Among other things, agencies have adopted training that examines implicit biases and have pushed to hire more minority recruits.

[Read the whole story](#)

Drought-stricken Calif.

boosts conservation

By Scott Smith, AP

Residents of drought-stricken California doubled their water conservation efforts in March compared with the month before by turning off their sprinklers when the rain fell and changing habits, officials said Tuesday.

Cities and businesses used 24.3 percent less water compared with the same time in 2013. That's twice the saving from the dry month of February, when the savings hit an all-time low of 12 percent, water regulators announced at a meeting in Sacramento.

"This is the most welcomed news I've had in a long time," said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. "In the rain, people know to turn off their sprinklers."

March was a cooler and wetter month, and officials also credited Californians with changing their habits, especially when it comes to watering their outdoor landscaping, which consumes half of a home's water use.

Conservation since mandatory cutbacks began in June 2015 has saved enough water to serve 6.5 million people for one year, or 17 percent of the state's population, officials reported.

March is the first month under relaxed conservation requirements. Californians are expected to use at least 20 percent less water, a break from the previous nine months ending in February when Californians were under stricter orders to conserve by 25 percent.

A nearly average amount of rain and snow this winter has eased California's dry spell, filling key reservoirs in Northern California. Officials warned, however, that the state remains

in a drought.

This month state regulators in Sacramento are busy writing a new method for conservation in the five-year drought that will be implemented in June. They have said requirements could be reduced in some areas and maintained in others.

The easing drought has prompted many local water districts to say they want to set their own conservation targets. Other water districts say the state should completely drop the drought emergency because key reservoirs in Northern California are nearly full.

New regulations, however, will likely keep in place some level of conservation requirements, officials said.

“Californians have risen to the occasion and acquired habits and skills to conserve,” said Jelena Hartman, a state water board senior scientist for climate change. “I believe this is showing the commitment Californians have for conservation.”

Lawsuit goes after Whittemore's Glenbrook house

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

In a lawsuit filed Friday, three days before Harvey Whittemore's release from serving a sentence for breaking campaign finance laws, the Nevada lawyer and lobbyist and his wife are being sued by Bank of the West.

Filed in Reno's Second Judicial District Court on April 29, the lawsuit accuses Annette and Harvey Whittemore of creating shell companies to hide assets, including the family's

Glenbrook home.

Calls to the Whittemore family were not immediately returned.

Read the whole story

SLT cops looking for suspects in double stabbing

Two South Lake Tahoe men were stabbed Wednesday night near the bike path behind Meek's Lumber in the center of town.

The names of the victims – ages 31 and 43 – have not been released.

They were found at the corner of Highway 50 and Al Tahoe Boulevard about 11:20pm May 4. One had a slash on the side of his abdomen, the other had been stabbed in the chest. One has been released from Barton Memorial Hospital, the other is expected to survive.

Neither victim was able give officers exact details other than to say they encountered their assailants on the path, an argument ensued and then a sharp weapon was drawn.

The suspects are described as males about 5-feet-10, 160 pounds.

Anyone with information is asked to call 530.542.6100 or Lake Tahoe Secret Witness at 530.541.6800.

Tahoe water district sues Douglas County

By Kathryn Reed

Water customers at the lake say they are suing Douglas County because they are being forced to subsidize another water company, which is against state law, and therefore they are being discriminated against.

“If the county means what it says and every water system must stand on its own, then they need to split Uppaway from Cave Rock,” Brett Tibbetts told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We are subsidizing their \$1 million tank and their operation system. That is illegal under Nevada law.”

Tibbetts is one of 50 people named in the lawsuit. He and the others are customers of the Cave Rock/Skyland Water System, but make payments into the Cave Rock/Uppaway Enterprise Fund.

Douglas County District Attorney Doug Ritchie did not return multiple calls.

In 2010 the county was looking at consolidating all the public water districts, but opted not to because of perceived inequities. Four years later the thinking changed to having the lake consolidate without the valley. It progressed to the point where twice the commissioners approved such a deal.

The final vote, though, had them reversing course and that is where things stand today – fractured.

“Despite the county’s adopting a policy of each community’s standing on its own to pay for its water system, the county continues to lump together a select portion of the ratepayers in the Cave Rock/Skyland System (i.e., those ratepayers in the disadvantaged communities) in a manner in which these selected ratepayers subsidize the Uppaway System since it has such a small base of ratepayers,” the court filing says. “This is in direct violation of the county’s policy that each community water system must stand on its own. And it is discriminatory against the ratepayers in the disadvantaged communities since ratepayers in the Skyland System and ZWUD [enterprise funds] have no similar responsibility to subsidize the Uppaway System.”

There are four public water entities in the county at Lake Tahoe – Cave Rock, Zephyr Woods Utility District (ZWUD), Skyland and Uppaway. But they aren’t completely separate. Cave Rock and Skyland are one operating system, meaning they use the same pipes and intake systems from the lake, as well have a shared water filtration-purification plant.

Rates are a different matter. Per a county decision, Cave Rock and Uppaway customers are together in an enterprise fund, meaning they share expenses/revenues. These water customers pay \$195 per month, which is one of the highest rates in the basin.

(Cave Rock Water System includes residents from Cave Rock Estates, Hidden Woods, Lakeridge, Lincoln Park, Bedell-Lyons, as well as a few others.)

Uppaway has 31 customers who use groundwater. Physically, there is no connection between this water system and Cave Rock. Cave Rock/Skyland has 516 customers who get their water from the lake.

“We are not trying to come down on Uppaway. We would have been fine with consolidation,” Tibbetts said. “We are saying the

way it stands today is unfair and illegal.

"We think they have been hypocrites," he said of the county commissioners.

The crux of the matter is the plaintiffs want to be treated fairly and for the county to follow the law.

"We are open to any number of ways to solve it. We just don't want to be the only ones at the lake that are discriminated against when it comes to subsidizing another water company," Tibbetts said.

EDC sheriff told to slash budget by \$4 mil.



Dwindling ammunition supplies at El Dorado Sheriff's Office could affect training. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County supervisors appear to be putting the hiring of a public information officer and swimming pool over fully funding the sheriff's department.

There is a \$7 million budget deficit for the fiscal year that starts July 1. Instead of recommending cuts, the board last week told acting CEO Larry Combs what to spend money on that is not currently in the budget.

On April 26 the electeds agreed they want a PIO, road maintenance and to pay the debt for the new public safety facility, along with money for Placerville's pool and other items.

It's Combs' job to appease the electeds.

But at no time during that meeting was the possibility of slashing the sheriff's budget by \$4 million brought up. In fact, Combs still has not spoken directly with Sheriff John D'Agostini, even though the sheriff has requested a meeting. It was an analyst in the CAO's office who told the finance guy in the sheriff's department about the cuts.

"We have not increased anything in the six years I've been here," D'Agostini told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It seems every time there is a shortfall, they ask for the money from us. I am tired of being the Bank of El Dorado County."

Combs also isn't returning *Lake Tahoe News'* call. And without information from that office it's unknown how the entire deficit will be erased, let alone money found for what the supervisors want to fund. (Legally, the county has to have a balanced budget. Using reserves is not a sustainable, long-term solution.)

"I'm hoping the CAO's office gives me a call and we can work this out instead of them digging their heels in," D'Agostini said.

Supervisor Sue Novasel also didn't respond to an inquiry from *LTN* about the sheriff's budget and what her priorities are for the overall budget.

Cutting positions would be one option for the sheriff. Each position, on average, is about \$125,000/year. This includes all benefits. This coming year he wanted to hire a detective, technicians and deputies to the tune of \$1.6 million. Not funding those still leaves a \$2.4 million hole.

The sheriff's department had to make cuts for this fiscal year. Ammunition is one thing that is not fully funded, so the sheriff no longer has the supply on hand that he prefers. Regular trainings and certifications require the officers fire their weapons.

Part of his request for the upcoming fiscal year was funding to get the stock of bullets back to a level he deems responsible.

"I'm frustrated right now," D'Agostini said.

Most years the budget is being worked on almost year-round. Not so this year. Department heads are usually notified at the beginning of the year about potential cuts. This gives enough time for thoughtful decision-making. Combs didn't employ this strategy. It doesn't help that Combs works part time, lives in Auburn and is essentially a temp worker.